

Amendments to the Claims

1-14. (Cancelled)

15. (New) A method for producing purified marigold oleoresin, which comprises:

subjecting marigold oleoresin to supercritical fluid extraction, to obtain an extraction solution and an extraction residue;
dissolving the extraction residue in a ketone solvent to obtain a solution;
cooling the solution to form precipitates and removing the precipitates from the solution; and
concentrating the solution, to thereby obtain the purified marigold oleoresin.

16. (New) A method for producing purified marigold oleoresin, which comprises:

dissolving marigold oleoresin in a ketone solvent to obtain a solution;
cooling the solution to form precipitates and removing the precipitates from the solution;
concentrating the solution;
subjecting the concentrate to supercritical fluid extraction, to obtain an extraction solution and an extraction residue, to thereby obtain the purified marigold oleoresin as the extraction residue.

17. (New) The method for producing purified marigold oleoresin claimed in Claim 15 or 16, which is characterized by carrying out the step of supercritical fluid extraction in the presence of a diluent.

18. (New) The method for producing purified marigold oleoresin claimed in Claim 15 or 16, which is characterized by carrying out the supercritical fluid extraction using a supercritical fluid selected from the group consisting of carbon dioxide, ethane, ethylene, propane, toluene and dinitrogen monoxide.

19. (New) The method for producing purified marigold oleoresin claimed in Claim 15 or 16, which is characterized in that the ketone solvent is acetone, methylethylketone or diethylketone.

20. (New) The method for producing purified marigold oleoresin claimed in Claim 15 or 16, wherein the supercritical fluid extraction is carried out using a carbon dioxide supercritical fluid under the condition that the carbon dioxide pressure is $(980 \text{ to } 2940) \times 10^4 \text{ Pa}$ ($=\text{N/m}^2$) and the temperature is at critical temperature to 80°C .

21. (New) The method for producing purified marigold oleoresin claimed in Claim 20, wherein the supercritical fluid extraction is carried out using a carbon dioxide supercritical fluid under the condition that the carbon dioxide pressure is $(1470 \text{ to } 2450) \times 10^4 \text{ Pa}$ ($=\text{N/m}^2$) and the temperature is at 40°C to 60°C .

22. (New) Purified marigold oleoresin obtained by the method described in Claim 15 or 16.

23. (New) Purified marigold oleoresin as claimed in Claim 22 having a lutein-fatty acid ester content of not less than 20% and a viscosity of not more than 20,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

24. (New) Purified marigold oleoresin as claimed in Claim 23 having a lutein-fatty acid ester content of not less than 30% and a viscosity of not more than 20,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

25. (New) Purified marigold oleoresin as claimed in Claim 24, wherein the viscosity is not more than 10,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

26. (New) Purified marigold oleoresin as claimed in Claim 25, wherein the viscosity is not more than 5,000 mPa.s at 30°C .

27. (New) A soft capsule which contains the purified marigold oleoresin as described in claim 22.